

cc: DSC

BQ

State Water Contractors San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority

June 28, 1999

The Honorable Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Secretary Mary Nichols
Resources Agency
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Acting Regional Director Kirk Rodgers
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Director Thomas Hannigan
Department of Water Resources
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Director Mike Spear
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2233 Watt Avenue, Suite 120
Sacramento, CA 95825

Director Robert Hight
Department of Fish and Game
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretaries Babbitt and Nichols, Directors Hannigan, Hight, Rodgers, and Spear,

As you are aware, we have been and are still being confronted with an ongoing water supply crisis. Continued Endangered Species Act restrictions on Delta pumping, coupled with summer water requirements south of the Delta, could result in San Luis Reservoir being nearly empty causing severe water quality and water supply impacts in our service areas.

Information available to us from your agencies late Friday is encouraging. We understand the most recent monitoring shows Delta Smelt are not threatened by operation of the federal and state Delta pumps. As a result, your agencies agreed to continue to increase pumping on Friday with the goal, barring unforeseen circumstances, to restore project operations by the end of this week. We appreciate the collaborative effort by your federal and state agencies in the last ten days that led to this decision.

At the local level, our agencies have been working daily with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Bureau of Reclamation to evaluate and adjust our scheduled summer water deliveries from the State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP) and to implement local voluntary programs with federal assistance to reduce summer deliveries from San Luis Reservoir.

The most recent projections available from DWR indicate that assuming the goal to restore Delta pumping moves ahead as planned together with reductions of our summer water deliveries from the SWP and CVP, storage at San Luis Reservoir may be maintained at levels which would

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hopefully avoid the immediate water quality and water supply shortages feared by our water users.

While this immediate water crisis may be easing, we urge you to stay on top of this issue and continue the same level of diligence and cooperation to recover project storage as soon as possible.

The actions to protect fish over the past two months have been extraordinary and unprecedented. While we believe that planning and operational mistakes have been made this year, the purpose of this letter is not to criticize, but to urge a continued creative and proactive effort to solve water problems caused by this year's fish protection actions.

The actions imposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since mid-April have reduced storage at San Luis Reservoir by almost 500,000 acre-feet. Absent these actions, San Luis Reservoir storage would have recovered sufficiently by year-end to safeguard water supplies should year 2000 bring dry conditions or unforeseen emergencies.

Recognizing that the fish protection actions this year were extraordinary, we urge equally extraordinary actions be taken this summer and fall to recover storage at San Luis Reservoir by the close of the year. If we fail to meet this goal, both fish protection measures and water supplies for our users will be in jeopardy next year.

This summer's crisis pales in comparison to what may be coming next year. An action plan must be developed to recover storage at San Luis Reservoir. We respectfully request this issue receive attention at the highest levels and you convene the responsible federal, state and local agencies together with the California stakeholders to move forward with the actions and funding required.

We look forward to your prompt response and pledge to do everything we can to assist.

Xc: President Clinton
Governor Gray Davis
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
California Congressional Delegation
Senator Jim Costa
Assemblyman Mike Machado
California State Legislature
Assistant Secretary Patricia Beneke
California Business, Labor and Water Coalition
Agricultural Water Caucus
Environmental Water Caucus
Urban Water Caucus